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'My White Moonlight' or 'Merely Industrial Porcelain': Chinese users perceptions towards Finnish design products on Xiaohongshu through the use of Appreciation resources

This bachelor's thesis examines what types of linguistic resources are used by Chinese users online when discussing Finnish design products, and how these lexical units illustrate their perceptions of it.

The research material consists of post texts and comments collected from the Xiaohongshu (小红书) platform. In data analysis, this research implements the Appraisal theory developed by James R. Martin and Peter R.R. White (2005), which focuses on the linguistic resources used to express attitudes, i.e. feelings, perceptions and evaluations. The framework consists of three interacting resources, of which this study utilizes the Attitude resource and more specifically its subcategory Appreciation. In the study, the data is grouped into three thematic groups of this subcategory, which are reaction, i.e. the impact and appeal of the evaluated object, composition, i.e. the form and structure of the object as well as the complexity and balance of them, and lastly valuation, i.e. the worth or significance of the evaluated object.

In this study, the dominant group, reaction, suggests that Chinese users' perceptions of Finnish design focus primarily on aesthetics and the outward appearance of the product. This is also supported by the most frequently used expressions 好看, i.e. "Good-looking" and 美, i.e. "Beautiful". Although this study's data implies that views towards Finnish design are mainly positive, users also express critical and mixed views of the products. These mixed perceptions focus on comparing between different products or older and newer product series, as well as showcase users' change of opinion. The study results also provide indications of other attitudes towards products. These include, among other things, assessing the suitability of products for different situations and uses, and comparing Finland with other countries in terms of product quality.

The results of this bachelor's thesis can provide useful perspectives for Finnish design companies and offer potential ground for adapting marketing language.